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No. 1.

A NOTE ON THE IMPERSONAL PRONOUN IN OLD HIGH GERMAN

The use of the impersonal *es* in the history of the German language was a secondary development and did not gain very much ground, so far as our literary monuments allow us to infer, until the Middle High German period. In Old High German the use of the impersonal pronoun (*iz*) was extremely limited both as subject and as object of the verb. It is the purpose of this article to treat the syntactical development of this indefinite pronoun in Old High German with special reference to its use as object of the verb; tracing the transition of the pronoun object from its purely personal to its purely impersonal construction in which the pronoun denotes merely the abstract idea of the verbal action.¹ References will be made also to Middle High German, insofar as the M. H. G. construction is connected with the earlier syntax of the language.

The first and original use of the pronoun *es* was entirely personal, representing some substantive singular of the same gender and did not, therefore, differ in any respect from the use of the masculine or feminine pronouns. The Gothic, just as the Latin and Greek, usually omitted the personal pronoun in the nominative case, except where especial emphasis was necessary,

jah waiwûn windôs jah bistugun bi þamma razna
jainamma jah ni draus. *Matth.* 7, 25.

¹ BIBLIOGRAPHY: Curme, Geo. O., *A Grammar of the German Language*, New York, 1905, pp. 347-352. Erdmann, Oscar, *Grundzüge der Deutschen Syntax*, Stuttgart, 1866. Erdmann, Oscar, *Untersuchungen über die Syntax der Sprache Otfrieds*, Halle, 1874. Grimm, Jacob, *Deutsche Grammatik IV* (Neuer Abdruck, Gütersloh, 1898, p. 257 ff.). Grimm, Jacob, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, III, Leipzig, 1862, pp. 1116-1125. Paul, Hermann, *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*, Halle, 1898 (4th ed. 1909), § 91. Wilmanns, Wilhelm, *Deutsche Grammatik*, III, 2, Strassburg, 1909, § 237. Wunderlich, Hermann, *Der Deutsche Satzbau*, III, Stuttgart, 1901, 243 ff.

(Not, jah *ita* ni draus, *ita* = *razna*.) But in O. H. G. the neuter pronoun singular was most often used in such a case. Tatian (43, 1) translates the same passage *Matth.* 7, 25, using the neuter pronoun singular which is omitted in the Gothic:

inti anafielun in thaz hûs, inti *iz* fiel.

(Cf. Luther: stießen an das Haus, da fiel *es*.) The same use of the personal pronoun *es* appeared regularly in M. H. G. (except perhaps in cases of 'Ersparung der Rede,'² where like any pronoun it may be inferred from the context of the lines immediately preceding):

ûfz pfert er saz, *es* truoc in kûme fürbaz. *Parz.* 534, 18.

Similarly the accusative of the personal pronoun *es* represented originally a neuter substantive. The accusative was less often omitted in the older dialects than was the nominative, even the Gothic being generally unable to dispense with it:

jabai augô þein þata tãihswô marzjai þuk,
usstigg ita (*ita* = *augô*). *Matth.* 5, 29,

which T. likewise translates: "arwirph *iz* fon thir," T, 28, 2. So in M. H. G.,

Sigelint diu rîche nâch alten siten pflic
durh ir sunes liebe teilen rôtez *golt*.
si kunde'z wol gedienen. *Nib.* 40, 4.

where *es* = *golt*.

The first step towards the use of the impersonal *es* was to represent, instead of a neuter substantive, a neutral idea implied in a substantive previously mentioned, with which the pronoun often cannot agree in gender and number. In O. H. G., O. I. I. 6 ff.:

ôgdun iro kléini in *thes tih-tonnes* reini.
Is ist ál thuruh nôt so kleino girédinot,
iz dúnkal eigan fúntan, zisamane gibúntan.

iz in both lines (7, nom., 8, acc.) has direct reference to *thes tih-tonnes* in the preceding line 6. As the author proceeds, however, the particular idea expressed in *thes tih-tonnes* becomes the gen-

² Paul, *M. H. D. Grammatik*, § 381.

eral theme of discussion so that only the general idea of 'writing poetry' is kept in mind. This general idea is represented by *iz*, occurring repeatedly in the subsequent lines (ll. 13, 14, 15 *iz* machont; l. 15, *iz* ist gifuagit; l. 21, duent *iz*; l. 23, eigan sie *iz* bithenkit, etc.). After the substantive *thes tihtonnes* itself became lost in the linguistic consciousness, *iz* was used referring to 'whatever one writes,' a neutral idea which had its inception in the substantive in question; so l. 37,

Íli thu zi nôte *theia scóno* thoh gilute

and l. 39,

Tház tharana singe, *iz scóno* man ginenne.

Similarly in I. I. 9, 10,

Sie ouh in thfu gisagetin, thaz then *thio búah* nirmsáhetin. joh wól er sih firwésti, then lésan *iz* gilústi.

Iz (acc. object of *lesan*) refers to the neutral idea implied in the preceding line, in *thio buah* which expresses the same general idea as the substantive *thes tihtonnes*.

want her dô arme wuntane bougá,
cheisuringu gitân . . .
dat ih dir *it* nu bi huldî gibu. *Hildebr.* 35.

(ich schwöre), 'dass ich *es* dir nun aus Freundschaft gebe.' *It* refers to *wuntane bougá* (l. 37), 'a pair of golden bracelets' which Hildebrand has unwound from his arm and presents to his son in token of friendship.³

So too in M. H. G., *ez* may refer to a neutral idea implied in a substantive previously used, as, for instance,

Disiu selben mære gehôrte Sigemunt
ez reiten sîne liute : dâ von wart im kunt
.
.
.
Ez gevriesc ouch Sigelint, des edelen küneges wip.
Nib. 50, 1, 2, 51, 1.

Ez in these lines refers to the general idea implied in *disiu selben mære* with which it cannot agree both in gender and number since the substantive is plural while the pronoun is singular.

In both cases we have the beginnings of *iz* used to represent a neutral idea implied in a substantive previously used. The next step in the development of the impersonal use of *iz* was to repre-

sent a neutral idea (very often a clause, sometimes a verb, etc.) implied in the context without referring to a substantive. For instance in O. H. G., O. *An Hartmut*, l. 24,

thar thultent béh filu héiz so ih *iz* álleswio ni wéiz,

iz refers to the neutral idea implied in 'thar thultent beh filu heiz,' namely, 'their suffering the pangs of hell.' Similarly in O. *an Hartmut*, l. 105,

Óba thu es begínnis, in búachon thu *iz* fíndis,

iz refers to the neutral idea implied in the previous lines in which Otfrid has given an account of the lives of those men who were beloved of God. *Iz* comes, then, to represent the general subject under discussion and is equivalent to 'das von mir Erzählte,' *iz* = *the thing of which I have been speaking*.

joh ób *iz* zi thfu wurti, thaz blúat iru firstúlti.

O. III, 14, 22.

Iz refers to the neutral idea implied in *zi thiú* which, in turn, represents a thought previously mentioned in line 18 (thaz siu inan biruarti), 'if it (cf. l. 18, that she could touch the hem of his garment) should be brought to pass, then (she thought to herself that) her blood would stop flowing.' Cf. O., I, 2, 19, "ob *iz* zi thiú thoh gígét."

Similarly in M. H. G., *ez* may also represent a neutral idea without referring to a neuter substantive,

'nu versprich *ez* niht ze sêre,' sprach aber ir muoter dô.
Nib. 16, 1.

Ez refers to the substance of the preceding stanza (15) in which Kriemhild has sworn never to wed.

der wirt der bat *ez* lâzen. *Nib.* 36, 1.

Ez refers to the various activities of the tournament described in the preceding stanza.

In these cases the impersonal pronoun represents a neutral idea previously implied in the sentence but it may also (both in the nom. and acc.) often refer to some neutral idea which is to follow; for instance, O. *an Ludwig*, 21,

óba *iz* uuard iowánne in not zi féhtanne,

iz refers to the neutral idea expressed in the subsequent clause *in not zi fehtanne*.

³ Cf. Wunderlich, *Satzbau*, II, 244.

In hímilriches scóne so wérde iz iu zi lóne
mit géltés ginúhti, thaz ír mir datut zúhti,
O. an Sal., 21, 22.

iz refers to the subsequent clause introduced by *thaz*. Similarly :

iz ist in álanáhi, tház thu nan gisáhi. O. III, 20, 177.

Likewise,

So er thára iz tho giffarta, er thesa wórolt ziarta,
O. II, I, 29.

iz refers to the neutral idea expressed by the following clause introduced by *er*. Cf. O. III, 14, 24 ; 21, 5. 19 ; v, 19, 34.

Similarly in M. H. G., *ez* often refers to a neutral idea expressed in a subsequent clause :

er 'nbót *ez* froun Uoten und ir tohter wol getân
daz si mit ir mageden hin ze hove solde gân.
Nib. 275. 3. 4.

Not only was the neuter pronoun in its impersonal function less often used in the nominative case in O. H. G. than in M. H. G., but its use in the accusative case was still less frequent. This was especially true where *iz* represented not some neutral idea previously mentioned or about to follow but simply the abstract verbal idea itself. In O. H. G. the linguistic material is so limited that it is impossible to follow this development satisfactorily, but in M. H. G. we find that the impersonal *ez* represented more often some particular situation in question rather than merely the abstract verbal idea. Then from this particular situation the *ez* very often went over into the mere abstract verbal notion ; the particular idea being entirely lost in the linguistic consciousness. Almost all such verbs with *ez* had reference to some particular situation involved in the verbal action in which the medieval customs of dancing, jousting, singing, drinking, etc., played an extensive rôle.⁴ The original significance of the verbal action with reference to these customs was, in the course of time, lost in the linguistic consciousness and thus passed over into an entirely abstract notion. For instance, *ez trîben* meant originally *das Spiel, den Ball treiben*, 'to drive or move the ball in some kind of game.' Then it passed over into the general notion of *moving* or *acting*, the *ez* originally

referring to some particular thing (such as a *ball*) but in course of time came to denote solely the abstract verbal idea. Thus the metaphor of the game came to denote *action in general*,

es *hâtz* getriben wol zehen jâr. Wigal. 113, 12,
so also in N. H. G.,

Ja, es ist ohne Beispiel, wie *sie's* trieben. Tell 541.

(Cf. M. H. G. *ez walken, ez rüeren, ez heben*, etc.) Sometimes the *ez* in M. H. G. retained its original particular significance but most often passed over into the mere abstract notion, which is almost universally the case in N. H. G. Many such M. H. G. expressions, especially such as had direct reference to the customs and civilizations of the Middle Ages, have been lost in N. H. G., while many have developed since the M. H. G. period. (Cf. N. H. G. *es davon tragen, es aufnehmen mit*, etc.)

In M. H. G. the indefinite object *ez* generally referred to some particular thing connected with the medieval customs above mentioned, but there are a few cases in which *ez* did not refer to any particular thing which the speaker had in mind but to things in general,⁵ thus representing the mere abstract verbal idea, for instance :

1. *ez lesen* : to read,⁶

ein rîter, der gelêret was
unde *ez* an den buochen las. Iw. 22.

2. *ez slâfen* : to sleep,

wir haben *ez* lange *geslâfen*. Fundgr. II, 303, 12.

3. *ez friden* : to make peace, become reconciled,

swie gern *ichz* *friden* wolte, der kûnec entuot es niht.
Nib. 2073, 3.

4. *ez enden* : to end 'it'; finish,

und wil *dirz* helfen *enden*, sô ich allerbeste kan.
Nib. 54, 3.

It is very probable that this impersonal *ez* in M. H. G., both as representative of some particular thing in connection with the verbal action (as in *ez trîben*—*das Spiel, den Ball*) and as denoting solely the abstract verbal idea (as in *ez*

⁵ Grimm's *Grammatik*, B. IV, 392 ff.

⁶ As this is apparently the only example of *lesen* with the indefinite *ez*, Grimm's interpretation is not assured ; cf. Henrici's edition.

⁴ Cf. Grimm's *Grammatik*, B. IV, S. 392 ff.; *DWb.* III, 1118 ff.

lesen, ez slâfen) existed in O. H. G., but the scarcity of linguistic material makes it impossible to discover to what extent the construction actually existed. Verbs of the former type in O. H. G. the writer has not been able to collect, and only two cases of the latter type have been found available.⁷

iz chôsôn = *loquī, recitāre, to talk, speak,*
sô wio ih iz chôsôe. N. Boeth.

The *iz* here is the cognate object of the verb, denoting the mere abstract verbal idea.

wie mac ter *iz* hevigôr chôsôn. *Graff* 4, 502.

There is one case of *iz* used in O. H. G. to denote the abstract verbal idea which seems to have escaped the notice of philologists. Grimm, for instance, makes no mention of it either in his *Wörterbuch* or his *Grammatik*. The passage in question is found in the *Fragmenta Theotisca*⁸ in the first fragment (*Evangelii secundum Matthaeum*), and is a translation of the fifteenth verse of the thirteenth chapter of the gospel according to St. Matthew. I shall use this passage as an example in O. H. G. of *iz* used to denote the abstract verbal idea: "incrassatum est enim cor populi huius et auribus graviter audierunt et oculos suos clausuerunt, ne quando videant oculis et auribus audiant," *Matth. XIII, 15*,

arsuillet ist gauisso desero liuteo herzo enti orom suaro
 gahortun enti iro augun bislozun, neo *iz* augom *gasehen*
 enti orom ni gahorren,

'for this people's heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of learning, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they *should see* with their eyes and hear with their ears.' The *iz* here is the cognate object of *gasehen* and represents the abstract notion implied in the verbal idea: (inf.) *iz gasehan* = *to see*. That such an *iz* is not at all necessary is shown by the fact that it is almost always omitted in O. H. G. with verbs of this character. In fact, the writer has been able to collect only these two examples in O. H. G., namely: *iz chôsôn*, and *iz gasehan*, in which *iz* represents solely the abstract verbal idea. With *gasehan*, for instance, the *iz* of this character is

elsewhere regularly omitted. Tatian translates the same passage without *iz*⁹:

Githiket ist herza thesses folkes, inti ôrun suarlîhho
 gihôrtun inti iro ougun bisluzun, mîn sie mit ougon
 sihuuane *gisehen* inti mit ôrun gihôrent.

The verb *iz gasehan* of the *Fragmenta Theotisca* is exactly equivalent to *gasehan* of Tatian without *iz*, and finds its direct parallel in M. H. G. in such verbs as *ez lesen, ez slâfen, ez friden*, etc.

From this brief outline of the use of the pronoun object in O. H. G. it may be inferred that the transition from its purely personal to its purely impersonal use was something as follows:

1. *Iz* used to denote a neuter substantive singular.

T. 28, 2. *oba thîn zesuwô ouga thîh bisuîhhê . . .*
arwirph iz; iz = ouga.

2. *Iz* used to denote a neutral idea represented by some substantive implied in the context or previously mentioned with which it *does not* agree both in gender and number.

O. I, 19, 10: *Sie ouh in thîu gisagetin, thaz then*
thio búah nîrmâhetin.
jah wól er sih firwésti; then lésen iz gilásti.
iz = thio buah.

3a. *Iz* used to denote a neutral idea implied in the context without reference to a substantive.

O. an Hartmut, 105: *Ôba thu es béginnis, in*
búachon iz fîndis. iz = das von mir Erzählte.

3b. This neutral idea may also denote merely the abstract notion of the verbal action. *Fragm. Theot. Matth. XIII, 15*,¹⁰ *neo iz . . . gasehen.* (inf.) *iz gasehan = gasehan.*

It is probable also that even in O. H. G. the impersonal pronoun object represented some particular action in connection with such medieval customs as have been mentioned in connection with certain M. H. G. verbs, and subsequently passed over into the entirely abstract notion (3b) but the scarcity of linguistic material makes any definite conclusion impossible. Certain it is, however, that the impersonal pronoun object had

⁷ Cf. *DWb.*, B. III, 1125.

⁸ *Ediderunt Stephanus Endlicher et Hoffmann Fallersleben: curante Joann. Ferd. Massmann. Wien, 1841, p. 4.*

⁹ Cf. Sievers' *Tatian*, Paderborn, 1892, 74, 6.

¹⁰ Cf. the *Monsee Fragments*, edited by Hench, Strassburg, 1890.

gained great headway in M. H. G. from which most cases in N. H. G. can be directly traced.

The origin of this construction in N. H. G. is a very important study in syntax and deserves a much more searching and thorough investigation than this article affords. There can be no doubt, however, that one instance of this impersonal construction in O. H. G. has been heretofore overlooked by philologists, namely, *iz gasehan* (inf.) which occurs in the *Fragmenta Theotisca* in the passage previously quoted. Such an example is very important in throwing light upon the origin of this construction inasmuch as it is taken from an early period in the history of the language where the linguistic material is so very limited. The examples of the impersonal objects given by Grimm¹¹ are all taken (with the exception of *iz gifiaren*, *iz geban*, *iz chōson* and *iz retten*) from the M. H. G. when the development of the construction had gained considerable progress. The study of the impersonal *iz* in O. H. G., on the other hand, reveals the earliest stages of the impersonal construction and it is quite possible that a careful examination of all the material at hand during this period will bring to light still other examples of *iz* as object of the verb, denoting the abstract verbal idea.

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THE REFRAINS OF THE *COUR DE PARADIS*¹ AND OF A *SALUT D'AMOUR*²

In studying the songs and the refrains of the *Roman de la Violette*³ and in searching elsewhere for similar lyrics, I found that comparatively little work had been done in grouping refrains of the same type. Work of this nature has been pub-

lished by Jeanroy in his *Origines de la poésie lyrique*, by Gaston Paris in his article on the *chansons* in Huet's edition of the *Rose*,⁴ by R. A. Meyer for the motets of the Bamberg, München and Wolfenbüttel manuscripts⁵ and by others; but as yet no complete study of the refrains cited by the various romances (*Cléomadès*, *Méliacin*, etc.⁶) has appeared. It is intended that the present article form a chapter of a more complete study embracing all the refrains cited in the longer poems.

I

The *Cour de Paradis*, as published by Méon, consists of 625 octosyllabic lines containing eighteen refrains and the liturgical *Te Deum laudamus* (the latter is given with musical notation). The poem may be termed a religious fabliau in which God holds court and the Virgin, the Archangels, the Apostles, the Evangelists, and the Patriarchs sing and dance in the most approved earthly fashion. It belongs to the same class of poems as Rutebeuf's *Voie de Paradis*, Raoul de Houdenc's *Songe d'Enfer*, and such other works as the *Verger de Paradis*, the lively *Salut d'Enfer*, etc. Unlike the *Rose* or the *Violette*, the *Cour de Paradis* offers only refrains of one line each (except one of two lines at line 458). They are introduced at irregular intervals, and are sung chiefly by the characters already mentioned as they come to the Court of Heaven in answer to God's bidding. The poem itself consists of a description of this Court.

The refrains are usually of the same nature as the carols of the *Violette* (the name is there used at line 201). In many, the adaptation of the words to the movement of the dance may be seen, as, for example, in the use of the refrain cited at line 278. If these refrains are the débris of older dance-songs, colored by the aristocratic court poetry, at least the idea of placing them in the mouths of the Patriarchs is novel.

The refrains are given in their order.

1. Je vi d'amor en grant esperance (259)

sung by the Patriarchs. Cf.:

⁴ *SATF.*, vol. 33.

⁵ *Gesellschaft für rom. Lit.*, XIII, 141 ff.

⁶ See G. Paris, *Chansons*, l. c., and Jeanroy, *Origines*, p. 116.

¹¹ *DWb.*, B. III, S. 1116-1125; *Grammatik*, B. IV, S. 392-401.

¹ Ed. Barbazan et Méon, *Fabliaux et Contes*, Paris, 1828, III, 128.

² Ed. Jubinal, *Nouveau Recueil de Contes, Dits, Fabliaux*, etc., Paris, 1842, II, 235.

³ See "The Songs of the *Roman de la Violette*" in *Studies in Honor of A. Marshall Elliott*, Baltimore, 1911.